British Colonies vol 7.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE FURTHER PROCEEDINGS AT THE INDIA HOUSE,

With Reſpect to the

BY-LAWS propoſed by the Committee of Proprietors elected by Ballot, for the Regulation of the Company's Shipping.

WITH

REMARKS

ON

A Pamphlet lately publiſhed, entitled, Obſervations on the Eaſt India Shipping.

BY ONE OF THE COMMITTEE.

Author of the Account of the former Proceedings.

LONDON,

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MDCCLXXV.

AN

ACCOUNT, &c.

ONE would imagine it to be a point, at preſent, indiſputable, that the Eaſt India Proprietors have been greatly injured in their property, by the miſmanagement of former Directors, with reſpect to the manner of chartering their ſhips, and the exorbitant price paid for freight. If this matter had not been ſufficiently evinced by a late inveſtigation of their proceedings, it has, certainly, been, ſince, clearly demonſtrated by inconteſtible facts; however obſtinately oppoſed by thoſe ſhip-huſbands, and commanders who are too deeply intereſted, ever to acknowledge conviction.

The ſhip-owners, who had received but very moderate dividends, even at the moſt extravagant price that had been paid for freight, were, very eaſily, induced to believe, that a reduction in this article, muſt be ruinous to their intereſt; and, conſequently, were the more ready to oppoſe any regulations, of ſuch a tendency; but as ſoon as the myſtery of the ſhipping buſineſs had been fairly laid open, it appeared demonſtrably evident, that they had long been the dupes of the huſbands and captains; and that, at a much more moderate price for the full tonnage, the owners, as well as the company muſt have been very conſiderable gainers.

Notwithſtanding theſe evident advantages to both parties, ſeveral of the ſhip-huſbands entered into articles of combination to keep the chartered tonnage as low, and the price of freight as high, if poſſible, as it had long been; but they were luckily defeated in their ſcheme,

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by Sir Richard Hotham's tender to the Directors, of the York, to China, or Bencoolen, at one third leſs expence of freight, for the full tonnage ſhe could ſafely carry. The advantage to the owners, as well as to the Company, was ſo very evident on his plan, that it was immediately followed by a like tender from others; ſo that the Directors, who had ſomewhat more regard to reputation, and were not quite ſo compliant to a party as their predeceſſors, thought proper to accept their propoſals; by which means, the combining party were obliged to abate, a little, in their demands; though they had, ſtill, ſufficient influence to get their ſhips chartered at a part, inſtead of the whole of their builder's tonnage; and alſo a much higher price, than had been demanded by the others.

The mutual advantages to the Proprietors, and ſhip-owners, muſt have appeared ſo glaring, by the freight of the

York, taken up for the full tonnage ſhe could ſafely carry, that every attempt was tried to defeat the good intention of the huſband and owners. Double the quantity of ſtones and tiles, the owners had been apprized of by the Company's officers, were ſent on board this ſhip; which tended to ſink her beyond all fairneſs and juſtice; and the caſks of flour put on board, were ſo improperly filled, that ninety-two caſks more than were neceſſary to contain the whole quantity ſent out by the Company, were alſo paid for, and put on board; which contributed, with other matters, to lumber her; abſtracted from the bad conſequences to be apprehended from a deficiency of fifty pounds of flour in each caſk; which muſt endanger the whole, by the air, in the empty part of the caſks, putrifying in the hot climates, in a voyage of ſixteen weeks to St. Helena; or breeding weevils, for want of being cloſe packed.

The captain of this ſhip, contrary to his duty to the Company and his owners, however conſonant to his own intereſt, and that of the combining ſhip-huſbands; declared her to be quite full, before ſhe had taken in near the amount of her builder's tonnage; and refuſed to take any more on board, though nine large hoys were laying in ſhore, deeply laden with goods ſent by the Directors for that purpoſe. So that Sir Richard Hotham, the huſband of her, who, on examination found, by the manner ſhe was ſtowed, that ſhe had been induſtriouſly lumbered, was obliged to have her cargo taken out, and properly ſtowed; without any aſſiſtance from the captain, who choſe to abſent himſelf on the occaſion; by which means he put three hundred tons more on board, without her appearing as much lumbered as ſhe was, when the captain declared her to be ſo full that ſhe could hold no more.

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As this behaviour of the huſband was unexpected, and unprecedented; and muſt have been a damning proof of the capacity of this ſhip, and others of the ſame tonnage; the captain and all the party declared her to be ſo full, that ſhe muſt neceſſarily founder; and the clamour was ſo great, that a committee of Directors went to inſpect her; who declared her to be in a proper condition for ſailing; though, at the requeſt of the captain, they ordered forty tons to be unloaded; but for what purpoſe, he beſt can tell; for it is a fact notorious to many, that ſhe was ſeveral inches deeper in the water when ſhe ſailed from the Downs, than ſhe was when ſhe departed from Graveſend; though every thing was, then, ſaid to be on board.

Although the party had been foiled in this attempt to blow her up, according to the ſailors phraſe, they endeavoured, by the moſt malicious reports, and publications in the news-papers, to injure the

the huſband, as well as the undertaking, in the opinion of every humane perſon, who ſhould give any credit to them. It was averred, that, ſhe was in ſo bad a condition for ſailing, the pilots refuſed to navigate her down the river; and that, if ſhe ſhould luckily eſcape foundering at ſea, half the people on board, the ſoldiers particularly, muſt periſh for want of room to breathe in, being packed ſo cloſely together.

The falſity of the firſt aſſertion was ſufficiently evident to thoſe who were acquainted with the report of the Committee of Directors; or the declaration of the pilot who navigated the ſhip to Portſmouth. And the bill of health, returned from St. Helena, by which it appears, that ſhe had not loſt one man in the voyage, nor had a ſick perſon on board when ſhe arrived there, would have been a ſufficient puniſhment to the propagators of the ſecond, if they had any ſenſation of ſhame. But, as fortune

had

had been ſomewhat unfavourable to them in theſe inſtances, the captain was reſolved to make ſome amends by his own induſtry; and accordingly, by a formal application to the governor at St. Helena, declared his ſhip to be in want of a ſufficient quantity of bread and flour; and that the ſailors were obliged to feed chiefly on yams, by which they were likely to ſuffer, greatly, on their voyage to Bencoolen.

He knew, though he could expect neither bread nor flour from the governor, that the account of ſuch a demand muſt be tranſmitted to the Directors; and he left it to his friends at home, to make the beſt advantage they could of it; who were ready enough to make uſe of it as a proof of the ſhip being ſo much overloaded with goods on the Company's account, there was not ſufficient room left for a neceſſary quantity of bread and flour for the people on board. But in this inſtance, alſo, this notable officer, and his friends,

friends, have been defeated by the aſſiduity of the huſband; who, by perſevering in application to the Court of Directors; and in inſiſting, ſtrenuouſly, on that matter being thoroughly examined into; has proved, to their ſatisfaction, by the cleareſt evidence, that there was not only a ſufficient quantity of theſe articles put on board by him, but alſo conſiderably more than could have been neceſſary for the voyage, or had been uſual for a like number of people.

The quantity of tonnage carried out by this ſhip, of 758 tons, builder's meaſurement, which amounted to 1100 tons, at leaſt, is an inconteſtible proof of what a ſhip of that burthen can ſafely carry out; but the quantity ſhe will bring home, muſt be extremely dubious, when the behaviour of the commander is conſidered. And it is to be wiſhed, ſincerely, by every honeſt Proprietor, that he may, on his return, be rewarded by

the Directors and his owners, to the full extent of his merits.

Whatever may be the event, it is certain the Proprietors owe more to ſir Richard Hotham, than to any huſband of a ſhip, in the Company's ſervice; for beſides his tender of the York, laſt year, at a much lower price for freight than was demanded by any other, he had, the preceding year, made a tender of the Royal Captain, to bring home the Company's goods from China, or Bencoolen, at 21 l. per ton, for as much as ſhe could ſafely carry; which was one third leſs than had been paid by the Company. This offer was rejected by the Deputy-chairman at that time, to whoſe extraordinary management the Proprietors may, in a great meaſure, attribute the ſituation of their affairs; which will, probably, be felt, and, conſequently, remembered for ſome time.

In return for theſe advantageous offers to the Company, this ſhip, the Royal Captain,

Captain, which was one of the largeſt in their ſervice, was ſent to China to bring home 499 tons only, according to the old charter party; and was ſent from thence, out of turn, to Balambangan, a moſt perilous, and almoſt unknown navigation; the danger of which, was ſo juſtly apprehended, that ſhe was purpoſely loaded with black, and low priced teas; and the valuable part of her cargo, conſiſting of raw ſilk, and hyſon teas, ſhipped on board the Princeſs Royal. The whole buſineſs for which ſo large a ſhip was ſent on ſo hazardous a voyage, was, merely, to deliver a few trifling ſtores at the ſettlement, and wait for a packet to England; in which buſineſs, the ſmalleſt, and leaſt valuable ſhip in the fleet, could have been more properly employed; if the firſt in turn was too great a favourite to be ſent on ſuch an errand.

Although this ſhip was unfortunately loſt in the voyage, it is by no means intended to inſinuate, that ſhe had been

devoted to deſtruction, as a ſacrifice to a party; but it is moſt certain, ſhe was unneceſſarily put in the way of danger; which, had ſhe eſcaped, muſt ſtill have been greatly to the loſs of her owners; as, by being ſent ſo far out of the way, ſhe muſt have been the laſt returning ſhip, and conſequently the laſt, in courſe, to be again employed.

However evidently, the capacity of the Company's ſhips to carry the full amount of their builder's tonnage may appear; however glaring, the advantages to the Proprietors, and ſhip-owners, by having them chartered at that tonnage, the party, in oppoſition, have ſtill had ſufficient influence, to hinder any by-law from being eſtabliſhed for the purpoſe, though ſuch a law had been reported neceſſary by a committee, elected by ballot, for the conſideration of that, and other matters; and although it had, alſo, been agreed to, by a General Court of Proprietors, as a by-law; and conſequently, could not be re-

repealed, without the approbation of two General Courts to be called, expreſsly, for that purpoſe.

This has been, very juſtly, deemed a matter of ſo great importance to the welfare of the Company, that two General Courts had been called, laſt year, for the further conſideration of it. The good effects expected by the firſt, from the ſtrongeſt appearance of a conſiderable majority in favour of the queſtion, were viſibly fruſtrated by frivolous objections, and all the uſual modes of protracting the determination of the queſtion, until the court becomes ſo thin, as to enſure a majority to thoſe in oppoſition, who were too deeply intereſted to neglect a buſineſs of this nature for a dinner. The whole proceeding, however, appeared ſo very uncandid, that nine Proprietors applied, by letter, for another General Court, before they left the court-houſe.

In this ſecond attempt to eſtabliſh this ſalutary law, the good intentions of a con-

conſiderable majority were again defeated, in a great meaſure, by the dexterity of the ſame gentleman who had rejected the tender of the Royal Captain, and other ſhips that were offered to bring home the Company's goods from China, at 21 l. per ton; to whom, alſo, the Proprietors had been extremely obliged for the temporary ſatisfaction they received from his accounts of the flouriſhing ſtate of their affairs at home and abroad, at the time they were on the eve of bankruptcy.

This gentleman, who was extremely well verſed in all the arts of conducting the buſineſs of a General Court, ſaw the difficulty of evading the queſtion, a ſecond time, by the ſame means; and, like a ſkilful pilot, changed his courſe; or rather like a boatman, who looks one way and rows another, declared his approbation of the eſtabliſhment of the moſt effectual by-laws, for the regulation of the Company's ſhipping; and in order

to

to have this done in the moſt complete manner, moved, that it ſhould be referred to the Directors, and four and twenty Proprietors, to prepare ſuch regulations as they ſhould deem moſt proper to be eſtabliſhed, by-laws; and lay them before a General Court of Proprietors, for their approbation.

The motion, however ſuſpected to be inſidious, was admitted, by conſent, to take place, with the addition of its being done as ſoon as it could be conveniently; in conſequeuce of which, moſt of the Proprietors, imagining the matter quite ſettled, had quitted the court; upon which it was immediately moved, that the twenty-four Proprietors ſhould be left out of the queſtion, and the whole matter conſequently left to the Directors; which was carried by a ſmall majority only, though all the Directors quitted their places, and voted for referring the matter to themſelves; with whom alſo the worthy gentleman, who made the mo-

tion, was not aſhamed to join, as ſoon as he perceived a probability of ſucceſs.

It is now near a year ſince this reference has been made, and no one ſtep yet taken by the Directors in conſequence; but it is to be hoped, that the Proprietors, who have taken ſo much pains in a matter of this importance, will not ſuffer the reſolutions of a General Court to be treated ſo very diſreſpectfully by thoſe whom they have appointed, and alſo pay for attending the buſineſs of the Company.

The public teſtimony that had been given by the Directors, voting to have the buſineſs left to themſelves, was ſuch an evidence of their diſinclination to the eſtabliſhment of any effectual by-law for the regulation of their ſhipping, as made it neceſſary to prevent their recurring to their old ruinous charter-party; by which millions had already been loſt to the Company. It was therefore moved, that

they

they ſhould not take up any ſhip at leſs tonnage than they had the preceding ſeaſon; until they had made their report of ſuch regulations, as they ſhould deem neceſſary; which was accordingly agreed to.

From the whole tenour of the Directors' conduct in this buſineſs, it may be reaſonably apprehended, that effectual regulations are not to be expected from that quarter. This is more ſtrongly confirmed by a late publication, ſaid to be written by one of that body, and approved by the reſt. The pamphlet is entitled, Obſervations on the Company's Shipping; calculated, evidently, to perſuade ignorant Proprietors, that the preſent mode of chartering the Company's ſhips, is the beſt that can be adopted. The author profeſſes himſelf a ſeaman, actuated by the moſt diſintereſted principles, and inclined to give the beſt information; how juſtly, however, will beſt appear from a candid examination of his work.

He begins, indeed, by admitting a moſt evident truth, "That there have

" been too many ſhips employed to bring " home the neceſſary quantity of goods, " and *rather* too high a price paid for " freight;" but he attributes this, in a great meaſure, " to the Court of Direc- " tors' having ſuffered large ſhips to be " built;" and inſinuates, " that no ſhip " above 758 tons ſhould have been ad- " mitted into the ſervice."

It will very readily be granted, that no ſhip of more than 758 tons, or even near ſo great a burthen, ſhould have been admitted into the ſervice, unleſs it had been employed to better purpoſe; and chartered for more than 499 tons. But this author, probably, did not, when he laid down this principle, intend to prove, as he has done by ſubſequent calculations, even on the moſt partial compariſon, that a large ſhip can afford to carry the Company's goods at a lower price than a ſmall one.

His aſſertion, p. 5, will not, perhaps, be ſo readily granted. " That the irre- " gularity which has long prevailed in the

" the dimenſions of the ſhips, from the " power of enlarging them, being left " in a great meaſure to be determined " by the caprice, and whim of indivi- " duals, has been the real cauſe of the " chartered tonnage remaining, ſo long, " the ſame ſtandard for all different ſizes, " as had originally been eſtabliſhed for " ſhips of ſmaller dimenſions, than have " been in uſe among the freight-ſhips " for many years paſt. And as this neg- " lect to increaſe the chartered tonnage, " has alſo contributed to lead gentlemen " into the miſtake of ſending out more " ſhips every year, than were ſufficient to " bring home the returning cargoes."

The paſſage is tranſcribed at large, that the author's meaning, if he has any, may not be miſtaken. For it is certainly, at firſt view, ſomewhat difficult to comprehend, how the enlarging the dimenſions of the ſhips could poſſibly be the cauſe of continuing the chartered tonnage as low as it had been; though it might have been ad-

mitted, perhaps, by a perſon of ordinary comprehenſion, a ſufficient reaſon for doing juſt the reverſe. Nor will it be leſs difficult to perſuade ſuch a perſon, that this neglect to increaſe the chartered tonnage, has led gentlemen into the miſtake of ſending out more ſhips every year, than were ſufficient to bring home the returning cargoes; as the Committee of Shipping, which conſiſts chiefly of ſhip-captains, muſt be admitted competent judges; of whom there ſeldom has been a ſcarcity, and at preſent, no fewer than nine in the Direction; and however difficult it may be to comprehend how ſuch perſons can be ignorant of the quantity of tonnage each ſhip can carry; or the number of ſhips neceſſary to bring home the returning cargoes; there is no difficulty in perſuading any man, tolerably verſed in the practice of Leadenhall-ſtreet, that ſuch an unneceſſary quantity of ſhipping might poſſibly have been employed, as the ſureſt means of ſecuring

their

their ſeats in the Direction, at the expence of the Company; or in the Scripture phraſe, of making to themſelves friends of the mammon of unrighteouſneſs.

The author ſeems, indeed, to have taken much pains in ſtating the quantity of goods that can, reaſonably, be ſtowed on board a ſhip, meaſuring 880 tons; and another 720; neither of which, will he admit, can carry her full builder's tonnage of the goods commonly loaded, even from China. But, it ſeems an invariable rule with the gentlemen bred in the Company's ſea-ſervice, either in debating, or writing on theſe matters, to conſider themſelves as the only competent judges. It is, therefore, in vain to argue the point; and as a philoſopher thought the beſt method of confuting his adverſary, who had made a long and laboured argument to prove there was no ſuch thing as motion, was to riſe up, and walk away; I ſhall ſtate a few facts from the Company's records, and leave the gentleman to conſider them at his leiſure.

In 1769,	The Groſvenor,	657	tons br's meaſ.	brought home	705	tons of goods.
	The D. of Gloſter,	657	ditto -	ditto -	691	ditto.
	Lord Mansfield,	632	ditto -	ditto -	669	ditto.
	Harcourt, -	676	ditto -	ditto -	710	ditto.
	True Briton,	679	ditto -	ditto -	716	ditto.
	London, -	676	ditto -	ditto -	730	ditto.
	Horſenden,	666	ditto -	ditto -	674	ditto.
	Sea-Horſe,	676	ditto -	ditto -	680	ditto.
In 1770,	Plaſſey, -	663	ditto -	ditto -	718	ditto.
	Ponſborne,	676	ditto -	ditto -	688	ditto.
In 1771,	Princeſs Royal,	864	ditto -	ditto -	977	ditto.
	Reſolution,	804	ditto -	ditto -	915	ditto.
	Bridgewater,	804	ditto -	ditto -	914	ditto.
	Prime, -	864	ditto -	ditto -	997	ditto.

By this it appears, in ſpight of all arguments and calculations, that the ſmaller ſhips have brought home ſafely, for the Company, from 20 to 54 tons of goods; and the larger ſized, from 110 to 113 tons, more than their builder's meaſure; but whether any ſurplus was added by the officers, for private dealing, cannot certainly be proved, though it can hardly be doubted. It appears alſo, that the larger the ſhips, the greater ſurplus tonnage, in proportion, they carried; and, indeed, the author of the Conſiderations, though he ſets out with condemning, abſolutely, the Company's having ſuffered large ſhips to be built for their ſervice, has admitted by his own eſtimate, p. 24, that a ſhip meaſuring 880 tons, will gain 60 tons in the ſtowage, againſt a ſhip meaſuring 770 tons. But he had not, probably, conſidered at that time, that if a large ſhip can gain ſo much in the ſtowage, ſhe can, conſequently, be afforded at a leſs price per

ton

ton for freight, with equal profit to the owners, and greater advantage to the Company.

It is a fact well known to the author of the Obſervations, as well as to other Directors and Proprietors, that ſhips are frequently ſent out to meet the returning ſhips from India; and unload them of their extraordinary quantity of goods for private trade, to be ſmuggled here, or ſent to a foreign market; either of which muſt be extremely injurious to the Company, to the fair trader, and to the public. And it is a fact well known to this author, that the Directors have received private information of ſeveral ſhips in the river, being engaged to go out to the iſlands this ſeaſon, to meet and unload the returning ſhips, under the new charter party, by which they are obliged to bring home $\frac{7}{8}$ of their tonnage, loaded on the Company's account; notwithſtanding which, he endeavours to perſuade the Proprietors, that they ought not

not to be chartered for more. Though it is very evident, that this unwarrantable practice can never be thoroughly prevented, but by loading the ſhips, on the Company's account, with the full tonnage they can ſafely carry. It is wrong, certainly, in any Proprietor, but it is ſhamefully diſhoneſt in any Director, who knows this to be the caſe, to oppoſe the eſtabliſhment of proper laws for the purpoſe.

The illicit practices, notoriouſly carried on by many of the commanders, can never be expected to be remedied by their brethren in ſuch iniquity, if there ſhould happen to be any ſuch in the Direction; nor is it to be expected that a captain, who, on quitting the Company's ſervice, to ſtep, perhaps, into the Direction, ſells the command of his ſhip for 4,000 l. or upwards, even to ſo great a ſum as 6, or 7,000 l. the greateſt part of which, ſometimes the whole, to be paid by the profits of the ſucceeding voy-

age; which, without connivance at extraordinary private trade, can never be hoped for. I ſay, the Proprietors can never, reaſonably, hope for redreſs of theſe matters from Directors, under ſuch circumſtances; however indiſputable their knowledge may be; or that any one, who had been himſelf in the practice of carrying on an illicit trade, which muſt, of neceſſity, be known to many, will dare to appear forward in puniſhing a crime, of which he is conſcious of having been often guilty.

Let us ſuppoſe a caſe, however unlikely, that a commander had been ſuch an adept, and ſo ſucceſsful in this kind of buſineſs, as to have made a conſiderable fortune by it; in conſequence of which, to have got into the direction; and, by proper management, into the chair. Let us imagine ſuch a Chairman, in his judicial capacity, examining a captain, on a complaint of his having carried a conſiderable quantity of copper, for inſtance,

ſtance, or any other prohibited commodity, to India, on his own account, and ſelling it there. Let us imagine him demanding, in a magiſterial tone, how much he carried out, and to whom he ſold it? If this captain ſhould happen to be a rough ſailor, and anſwer ſturdily, that he did not carry out near as much as the Chairman himſelf did, the laſt voyage he made; and that he ſold it to the ſame perſon who bought his, but not at quite ſo good a price: can it be imagined, that ſuch a buſineſs would be thoroughly examined into; or rather, that it would not be huſhed up, as ſecretly as poſſible.

How far any of the ſhip-huſbands may have a proper underſtanding with the commanders, can be known only to themſelves. But the extraordinary oppoſition of ſome of them to the chartering the Company's ſhips at the full tonnage, ſo very evidently for the advantage of themſelves, and the other owners,

if they have no ſeparate intereſt, cannot, upon common principles, be accounted for.

But to return to the Obſervations, which the author, perhaps, may imagine I have not paid a proper attention to, if I ſhould omit acknowledging the profound ſkill he has diſplayed in the knowlegde of weights, meaſures of bales, and cheſts; round edges and round corners; ſharp edges and ſharp corners in his *analization on the ſubject of ſtowage and coſt*, as he expreſſes it. It muſt certainly be allowed, that he has not been parſimonious of figures, in his inveſtigation of theſe matters; nor has he been prodigal of them, in his eſtimate of the expences of the prime coſt, and outfit of ſhips of different ſizes; or the profits by their voyages.—Theſe he ſtates in round numbers; proceeds without any kind of analyſis;—lays down propoſitions without the leaſt proof; and founds his calculations of profit to the owners, on them.

In

In order to enhance the expences of the large ſhips, and conſequently the price of freight, he aſſerts, contrary to conſtant practice and experience, that they require one fourth more ſailors; which muſt reduce the profit the owners might otherwiſe receive, one fourth on that article; and alſo, what they ſhould receive from the Company, for the carriage of goods, inſtead of the proviſions that would be required for ſuch an extraordinary number of ſailors.

He has taken greater pains, throughout, to ſhew, or, more properly ſpeaking, to declare his good intentions towards his brethren, than to prove that no ſhip ſhould be chartered for more than $\frac{7}{8}$ of her builder's tonnage. He ſays, p. 34, "That no ſhip of 720 tons, real "meaſurement, ſhould be chartered for "more than 665 tons, kintledge in-"cluded, if ſent to Bengal, or either of "the Coaſts; and for ſuch further tonnage "as ſhe can conveniently ſtow, at half price;"

price;" and admits, p. 38, "that it may "ſome time happen, from the bale goods "on board falling out particularly fine, "that a ſhip ſhall bring her real meaſure-"ment, kintledge included, or rather "more;" but as this is not to be expected to happen often, he thinks it moſt advantageous to the Company and the owners, that they ſhould not be chartered higher.

Let this matter be conſidered, even on his own ſtatement, and it will appear, that nothing can be leſs fair, or advantageous to the owners and the Company, than chartering their ſhips in the manner propoſed. He admits, that from the bale-goods falling out particularly fine, a ſhip may bring from Bengal, or the Coaſts, rather more than her real meaſurement, kintledge included, which he declares, in another place, to be always conſiderably more than the builder's. He admits alſo, that by loading two ſhips of the ſame tonnage, the one with a greater proportion of fine goods than the other;

the

the one may be filled with two thirds of the quantity of tons the other can conveniently ſtow.

Nothing can be more evident to common ſenſe, than that whilſt there remains the leaſt danger of partiality in the appointment of profitable, or unprofitable cargoes; the greater price per ton, will always be required for freight: and the moſt unfavourable for the Company will ever be the ſtandard to meaſure it by. Whereas if all ſhips were to be taken invariably, at their full builder's meaſure, with a power of loading them on the Company's account, to the full of what they can ſafely carry, above that tonnage, without any further expence to the Company; it muſt obviate every reaſonable objection; for the owners being aſſured of receiving a certain price per ton, for freight, could tender their ſhips on the moſt reaſonable terms to the Company, with certain profit to themſelves,

ſelves, and great benefit to the Proprietors.

A ſhip now tendered at 27 l. 10 s. per ton to Coaſt and Bay, for $\frac{7}{8}$ of her builder's tonnage, might be tendered, with equal profit to the owners, at 24 l. 1 s. 8 d. per ton, for their builder's tonnage; and as there can be no doubt of the ſmalleſt ſhip in the Company's ſervice, at preſent, being capable of ſtowing her whole builder's tonnage, at leaſt, by having a proper aſſortment of goods; it will be the buſineſs of the Company's officers abroad, to provide ſuch aſſortments; and ought not, certainly, to be any loſs to the owners if they do not; nor will the Company be injured by having a few tons extraordinary of coarſe goods, put on board any particular ſhip, provided ſhe is ſtowed to her full extent; for the ſurplus quantity of fine goods, that muſt in conſequence be put on board ſome other ſhip, will admit of her carrying a ſurplus tonnage, in proportion.

The

The author of the Obſervations has declared, p. 28, "that the ſhips from "Bengal, formerly, came nearer the "builder's tonnage, in the quantity laden "on board, than from either of the "Coaſts; but even the Naſſau, a ſhip "that came loaded from thence, in "1733, had not her builder's tonnage, "in ſalt petre, bale, and cheſt goods, by "20 tons, &c. and that unleſs the goods "ſhe ſtowed, where the bale packages "could not be put, are reckoned in the "tonnage; that ſhip did not bring her "builder's meaſurement, according to "the opinion ſo ſtrongly urged; that a "ſhip with ſalt-petre enough on board, "to make ſtone-ballaſt unneceſſary, the "uſual quantity of redwood, and the re-"mainder of the cargo bale goods, would "ſtow, in freight-tons, to the amount of "the tons contained in the builder's mea-"ſurement of each ſhip."

Here is a well known fact deſignedly and artfully mis-ſtated, in ſupport of a

pernicious meaſure. The author knows this ſhip, though but 531 tons, builder's meaſurement, brought home $6\frac{1}{4}$ tons, nett-goods, more than that meaſurement; and it is evident, even from his own authority, that the larger the ſhip, the more ſhe gains in the ſtowage, proportionably, on a ſmall one. He has admitted, p. 24, "that a ſhip of 880 tons, gains 60 tons "in the ſtowage, againſt a ſhip of 720 "tons;" conſequently, in the ſame proportion, a ſhip of 720 tons muſt gain above 74 tons, againſt one of 531. And if the Naſſau, a two-decked ſhip of 531 tons, builder's meaſure, could bring home nett-goods from Bengal, even to that amount, there cannot be a doubt, that every ſhip, at preſent, in the Company's ſervice, the leaſt of which is a three-decked ſhip, and conſiderably larger, can bring nett-goods, to the amount, at leaſt, of her builder's tonnage.

The author, p. 56, has made a computation of the goods that will be wanted an-

annually from Bengal, Madraſs, and Bombay, viz.

Inveſtments from	Bale and cheſt goods
Bengal and Coaſt,	2260 tons.
Bombay and Mocha, Do.	590
Mallabar pepper,	780
Redwood,	120
Salt-petre,	1700
in all,	5450 tons.

A ſhip of 531 tons, chartered at that tonnage, in order to take in her due proportion of each ſort of the above goods, to that amount; her cargo would be as follows, viz.

	Bale and cheſt goods
Bengal and Coaſt,	220 tons.
Bombay and Mocha, Do.	57
Mallabar pepper,	75
Redwood,	11
Salt-petre,	165
The ſeveral fractional parts of the above goods,	3

Amounting in the whole to 531 tons.

The Naſſau, in 1733, brought from Bengal.

Piece goods,	277¾ tons.
Raw ſilk,	58½
Cotton yarn,	9½
Shellack,	4¼
Sticklack	6¾
Turmerick	8¾
Cowries	15¾
Redwood,	128½
Private trade, 96 men,	80
	589¾

The ſame ſhip brought home, from Coaſt and Bay, in 1737, as follows, viz.

Piece goods,	356 tons.	Exceſs 78 tons.
Pepper,	48	Short, 27
Redwood,	28½	Exceſs, 17
Salt-petre,	122¾	Short, 43
	555 tons.	

The real contract-meaſure of this ſhip was but 522 tons, though ſhe meaſured 531: ſo that this ſhip brought home from Bengal, 33 tons, nett-goods, more than her builder's meaſure, excluſive of kintledge.

kintledge. And though ſhe carried 78 tons of piece goods more than her proportional quantity, according to the author's eſtimate, which he allows to be the moſt unfavourable for ſtowage; at the ſame time that ſhe was ſhort of her proportion of pepper, 27 tons; and ſalt-petre, 48 tons; which he admits to be the moſt favourable.

If it ſhall appear that this author was well acquainted with theſe facts, what credit ought to be given to his aſſertion, or opinion? or, more properly, what ſevere terms does a perſon in his ſituation, not deſerve, for endeavouring to miſlead the Proprietors in a point of ſo much importance to the welfare of the Company? It cannot well be imputed to his ignorance of this matter, as there is the ſtrongeſt reaſon to believe, from his attempting to under-rate this ſhip's cargo, that he had ſeen a ſtate of it ſimilar to the foregoing, which had been delivered to the Directors.

As

As to what he mentions of large ſhips coming from China, without having goods to the amount of their builder's tonnage, it is not only admitted, but complained of as the greateſt evil, and therefore propoſed to be remedied by proper regulations. And although the Prime, a ſhip of 864 tons, builder's meaſure, brought home goods, on the Company's account, in 1771, to the amount of 133 tons more, it is probable that neither this ſhip, nor any other in the ſervice, has ever yet been fairly, and fully loaded from thence, or any other ſettlement, on account of the Company; nor ever will be, until the private trade of the captains and officers is abſolutely ſuppreſſed.

The Pigot, a ſmall ſhip, brought home 31 tons of pepper, *in the hold*, more than her builder's tonnage. This is a fact well known to this author; it ſhews how very ingenious he is, and how deſirous of diſcovering truth. It ſhews alſo the proper

per weight that ſhould be given to his aſſertions, and to his arguments, if he had made uſe of any, that did not weigh abſolutely againſt himſelf. In truth the whole of his laboured Obſervations, ſhews his very good inclination to accommodate the commanders, from whom he may, poſſibly, ſtill retain a fellow-feeling, with ſufficient room to carry on their private buſineſs, at any expence to the Company; which, however, may very probably, like moſt of his arguments, prove quite the reverſe of what was intended.

In p. 10, this author, after ringing the changes on cubical feet and inches, informs us, "That tonnages of bales of "cotton, piece-goods, wrought ſilks, and "goods mixed with ſilk and cotton, are "reckoned by ſo many pieces to a ton, "which varies according to the nature of "the goods, and the nature of the "pieces, from 1200 down to 160 pieces "to a ton." And in p. 12, declares him-

himſelf clearly convinced, "from a cloſe "and careful inſpection, that the pre- "ſent modes of adjuſting the freights of "the cargoes are fixed upon the ſoundeſt "principles; and the ſureſt foundation "for the mutual benefit of all parties; "and if any alteration ſhall be made in "the mode of ſettling the tonnage, it "will tend to expoſe the Company and "owners, to frequent diſputes with each "other."

Page 13 he tells us, "It alſo evidently "appears from theſe meaſurements of "the ſeveral ſorts of goods, that they vary "ſo much in regard to the ſpace, that a "ton of each different ſort takes up; "that without a knowledge of the real "dimenſions of the goods in their ſeve- "ral packages, it will be impoſſible to ar- "rive at any certain judgment, as to the "number of tons a ſhip can be able to "ſtow from the different ſettlements." That the bale goods from Bengal vary from 12 to 18 cwt. to a ton.

From what I heard of this production, with which the promoters of the regulations for the Company's ſhipping had long been threatened, I conſidered it as the united effort of thoſe ſhip-huſbands and commanders who had been ſo very ſtrenuous in their oppoſition. And from reading it, I was the more inclined to imagine, that no ſingle perſon could well have compiled ſo large a heap of inconſiſtencies; but, as the reputed father ſtands, at preſent, in a more elevated ſtation, and has ſent it into the world from within the bar, at Leadenhall-ſtreet, I ſhall, by no means, attempt to abridge him of any part of the honour; and ſhall therefore, in juſtice to his great merit and ſtation, admit, that no man, but himſelf, could have conceived, "that the "diſparity in bales, from 1200—to 160 "pieces, and in weight, from 12 to 18 "cwt. to a ton, is the beſt method of "adjuſting the freights of the cargoes. "—And, that uncertainty, in theſe mat-

" ters, is the ſoundeſt principle that can " be fixed upon, to avoid diſputes."

This author ſeems to partake, in ſome degree, of the quality of the cuttle-fiſh, which when purſued, emits a kind of inky matter, that blackens the water, and leaves his purſuers in darkneſs. I muſt own myſelf fairly tired with ſearching after him; and left in the dark at laſt, with reſpect to every thing, but his good intention towards his friends, the India captains; who, to do them juſtice, have ſhewed no want of ſkill, in availing themſelves of every proper opportunity that has happened for their advantage.

Nothing can prove this more clearly, than their conduct laſt year, when they prevailed on the Proprietors to allot a conſiderable yearly ſum, to be divided among thoſe captains out of employment, who ſhould ſwear themſelves not worth the trifling ſum of 10,000l.—and this at a time, that more than half their dividends, were, in effect, under ſequeſtration for the pay-

payment of their debts.—No buſineſs of the kind could poſſibly have been better timed; it was taken up on the eve of the election of Directors, under a new mode of regulation: the candidates were numerous, and the intereſt of every party exerted to the utmoſt. So formidable a body as that of the captains and their friends, was not to be oppoſed, at ſuch a criſis; their arguments carried a proper weight, and they were accordingly reſpected; whilſt the cry of their younger brethren, the mates, who had applied at the ſame time, but were too poor to be ſuppoſed to have any votes, was too feeble even to be heard.

The intent of this allotment, however extraordinary, has been ſince applied to a purpoſe, at that time, probably not apprehended.—A captain, who was to have gone out commander of a ſhip that ſeaſon, on her fourth voyage, and who had a new ſhip building for him by a relation, has found out a method of turning this

buſineſs to proper account, by giving the command of his old ſhip to a mate, who is ſuppoſed to let him have all the advantages of private trade in the voyage in return; ſo that by becoming a captain in this manner, for one voyage only, he will be entitled to half pay from the Company for life, probably. And this notable captain who has contrived this matter, goes out in a new ſhip, to be continued in the ſervice to the end of her term; when, if he ſhall have ſteered clear of the Exchequer, he will not, probably, be qualified to receive half-pay.

From a recent account, which I have the ſtrongeſt reaſon in the world to believe well founded, however ſecret ſome perſons may think proper to keep it, the Proprietors will ſoon be convinced of the honeſt purpoſes, for which ſome very worthy gentlemen have been ſo ſtrenuous in their oppoſition to the Company's ſhips being chartered for their full tonnage.

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The Nabob of Arcot, who, for ſome time paſt, has given cauſe to ſuſpect him of deſigning to throw off the protection of the Company, as ſoon as he can find a ſafe opportunity, had applied to the Directors to ſend him a very conſiderable quantity of arms. In anſwer to which, they prudently referred him to their Governor and Council at Madraſs, to be ſupplied from their ſtores, if they ſhould deem it proper; of which they, being on the ſpot, muſt be better judges. This requeſt was very probably divulged to a few of the favourite commanders, who, in humble imitation of *ſome* of their ſuperiors, who had profited ſufficiently by ſuch clandeſtine practices; and in confidence of being powerfully protected by a party, whoſe influence was prevalent, entered boldly on the buſineſs, and carried out among them, no leſs than 15,000 ſtands of arms; which have been fortunately ſeized at Madraſs, on board the ſhips ſent from hence laſt ſeaſon,

ſeaſon, through the vigilance of the Governor and Council there, and the honeſty of the ſervants they employed.

The captains of theſe ſhips, when examined before the Governor and Council, are ſaid to have behaved with the higheſt inſolence, threatening them with the power of their friends, and their danger of being diſmiſſed, themſelves, from their employments, if they dared to moleſt them. It is remarkable that theſe arms were thus clandeſtinely carried out by thoſe people, who at the very time they were tranſacting this iniquitous buſineſs, were raiſing ſo unjuſt a clamour againſt the York, for promoting the proſperity of the Company by carrying out her full tonnage on their account.

The law, indeed, has provided ſome puniſhment for ſuch tranſgreſſors.—By the 10th of his preſent Majeſty, cap. 47. ſect. 2. tranſporting warlike ſtores, or aſſiſting therein, with intent to diſpoſe of

of the *ſame* in the Eaſt Indies, or within the limits of the Company's trade, is to be deemed a high crime and miſdemeanour, to be puniſhed corporally, or by fine, by a court of law at Weſtminſter.

Can it be imagined that ſuch a quantity of arms could have been put on board here, without the privity of ſome of the Company's ſervants? Or, is it at all probable that they were put on board without the participation of thoſe huſbands, particularly, who laboured ſo ſtrenuouſly to prevent their ſhips from being chartered, at their full tonnage, though ſo evidently advantageous to the honeſt owners?

There are ſome gentlemen of very fair character, in the Direction, who had been commanders of ſhips in the Company's ſervice, and it is particularly expected they will, in juſtice to themſelves, inſiſt upon this matter being thoroughly examined into; without which they muſt ſtand on a level with others, who,

per-

perhaps, from a conſciouſneſs of ſimilar practices, may be very deſirous of preventing an inquiry, that may lead, in the end, towards themſelves.

It can hardly be imagined, that a majority of the Directors can, poſſibly, be induced by favour to any party, or for any favourite purpoſe, to ſcreen ſuch delinquents from public juſtice on their return. If, however, contrary to all appearance, as well as to common juſtice, ſuch an event ſhould poſſibly happen; the proprietors muſt then neceſſarily recur to their own power; when it may be hoped, they will moſt heartily concur, not only in puniſhing the guilty, in whatever ſtation they ſhall be found, but alſo in eſtabliſhing ſuch regulations as may prevent the ruin, towards which the affairs of this Company have been long tending, by the corruption and depravity that ſeem almoſt to have pervaded the whole.

Amongſt the numerous evils, under which this Company has laboured for ſome time, there are none that require a more immediate remedy, than thoſe relative to their ſhipping. This matter has been, for ſome conſiderable time, under the conſideration of many ſenſible Proprietors; and from the beſt information I can receive, as well as the moſt ſtrict examination I can poſſibly enter into, relative to this buſineſs, I am the more thoroughly convinced, that, without an effectual regulation of the private trade to India, and a total ſuppreſſion of all private trade from thence, no radical cure can ever be effected.

I have obſerved, in the Appendix to Sir Richard Hotham's Candid State of India Affairs, lately publiſhed, a plan propoſed to obtain this very deſirable purpoſe, to the ſatisfaction of all the honeſt parties concerned. The allowance of a more enlarged quantity of goods that are not prohibited by the Company, to

be carried out, freight free, will be of great advantage to the public, as well as to the officers; and the effectual prevention of all private trade from India, in lieu of which, they are to be paid an adequate ſum by the Company and the ſhips owners, cannot be objected to by any officer, who does not profeſſedly avow, at the ſame time, his intention of making more by clandeſtine means; and the ſatisfying of ſuch, ſhould, ſurely, be the laſt object of the Company.

By the total ſuppreſſion of all private trade from India, the Company's ſales muſt, neceſſarily, increaſe in proportion to the quantity of goods at preſent admitted to be brought home by the officers; and alſo, what they diſpoſe of clandeſtinely. This is an object that likewiſe deſerves the attention of government, as the duties and exciſe muſt increaſe in proportion to the ſales; and the profit, in conſequence, to the Proprietors and the public, would not in all probability,

be

be far ſhort of one fourth of a million a year.

This deſirable purpoſe can never be effectually obtained, but by chartering the Company's ſhips at their full tonnage, and loading them from India, to the full of what they can ſafely carry; and as there could then be little room left for illicit dealings, they might be effectually prevented by proper by-laws.

The price of freight, at preſent, paid by the Company, on account of the tonnage allowed to their officers for private trade, would, with what is, alſo, allowed by the owners; be deemed, perhaps, a proper compenſation in money, in lieu of their trade from India. And the abſolute forfeiture of the whole, with an irreverſible diſmiſſion from the ſervice, for any breach in this article, might, perhaps, be an effectual remedy for an evil of this nature.

Upon the whole, notwithſtanding all the efforts of an intereſted party, and their

their influence with the Directors; notwithſtanding all the endeavours that have been exerted to miſlead the Proprietors; —notwithſtanding the great unwillingneſs that has appeared in the Directors, to the eſtabliſhment of proper by-laws for the regulation of the ſhipping: I ſay, notwithſtanding all theſe unfavourable appearances; it is preſumed, there ſtill remains a fund of perſevering virtue, amongſt the honeſt diſintereſted proprietors, ſufficient to enforce the eſtabliſhment of ſalutary laws, to ſave an injured Company from being deſtroyed, at leaſt, by their own ſervants.

FINIS.